

In Spanish America*

ANNABELLE KENT

IT was a starlit January night when mother and I left the train from the East at Albuquerque, New Mexico. The superintendent of Harwood Home met us, and we were soon cozily eating a belated supper in the school dining-room. The girls were so happy at seeing my mother again. She knew most of them by name, and tried to be a real friend to each. She always visited the classrooms when there, and gave a Sunday evening talk to the school. Her pride in their progress was great.

One cannot even visit Harwood school without feeling the sense of activity that pervades the house. The routine of the day is as regular as a clock. Breakfast over,

* Few officials of the Woman's Home Missionary Society have been privileged to be so closely and intimately connected with many lines of its work as was Mrs. Anna Kent. Not only as a trustee of the Society and as President of the local Board of Bancroft Rest Home, but indirectly through one of its Industrial Homes in the South, and as Bureau Secretary of its Spanish Schools in New Mexico and Arizona it may well be said of her, "All of which she saw and much of which she was." Her moulding touch rested upon countless lives, and "her works do follow her."

each girl has her appointed task; the little girls wash the dishes, brush the floors, and set the tables for the next meal, replacing the chairs, after each is carefully dusted, in the hall.

Others scrub bedroom floors, and make the beds, laying the sheets with exact precision. It is wonderful to see the pride each girl takes in doing her work well. In the sewing-room each has her work-bag—not some pretty arrangement of silk or ribbon, but a stout cotton bag—and her own chair, on which her mending is piled. The older girls add to their own the work for those too young to do it for themselves. The brown serge uniforms are all made in the school, and very neat the girls look in them. On Sunday morning, when they line up in the hall, ready to start for church, they pass careful inspection before leaving the house. Their tam-o'shanters match their dresses and have a white band embroidered in red with the initials of the society. They wear red ties and hair-ribbons. The one weakness to which the superintendent is indulgent is hair-ribbons. The girls do so love huge bows, and some of these are rather pathetic.

We entered with interest into the home

life of the Rose Gregory Houchen Settlement House at El Paso, and especially enjoyed the relations between the superintendent and her Mexican helpers. We watched a dozen little girls in the cooking class one day; they were so eager as the teacher wrote on the blackboard (in both Spanish and English) the formula for the meat patties they were to make, and divided the supplies with strict impartiality. The air of importance with which each girl mixed and moulded her patty, lit her gas stove, and attended to the baking, was very amusing. They were given pieces of brown paper in which to take home the results of their work, but the temptation to taste was too strong. Bits were broken off, and then as they realized that the remainder was very small, that, too, disappeared.

In the kindergarten, black-eyed, ragged little Mexicans moved with true Spanish grace and gravity through the pretty games. They had been gathered from the streets, and the kindergarten hours were the great event of the day for them. One day the teacher had been trying to give them the idea of God as our Heavenly Father. When, at the end of the lesson, she asked "Who is God?" nearly every child replied, "*Un Santo*,"—a saint!

The playground, with its swings and out-of-door games, was opened in the summer of 1914. Classes in hand and machine sewing for girls and for women, night classes in English with the help of our first Mexican deaconess, a library and reading-room, are among the activities carried on, or hoped for.

During our stay at the Mary J. Platt School at Tucson, one of the enthusiastic young teachers wrote: "We are just bubbling over with joy because Mrs. Kent is with us, and for the blessings she has bestowed upon us, so it is not easy to write of every-day affairs." The front yard came in for its share of furbishing up at this time. The gardener at the Arizona State University, which is quite near the school, presented us with four palm trees, two of them being date palms. The girls of the Junior and Senior Epworth Leagues competed to see which could carry the greatest number of wheelbarrow loads of earth from the holes made when the trees were planted.

Much interest is shown in the Bible Study class. The girls pass examinations on the catechism, the history of Methodism, and "How We Got Our Bible," besides memorizing five hymns, five Psalms, the commandments, beatitudes, apostles' creed,

and some fifty miscellaneous Bible verses. The little girls keep up with the older ones in the memory work. It is worth while to hear them sing and recite without a mistake.

At the time of one visit here, there was great excitement over the approaching wedding of one of the girls, an orphan and a ward of the Woman's Home Missionary Society. My mother had gathered a neat store of linen, gifts from various friends, purchased a simple white gown for her wedding dress, and a brown suit and hat. One evening the whole school gathered in the *patio* for the "presentation." Mother made a little speech, and then the girls crowded around the bride-to-be while she unfolded each article for their inspection. These girls are deeply interested in the Epworth League, and are quite independent of any help from their teachers in managing their devotional meeting and their socials. They asked mother to come to the *patio* one evening, and when she was seated there they passed in procession before her, each presenting her with some gift. These were mostly their own handiwork, bits of drawn work, verses written out, small maps, rabbits cut from paper and colored, and so on. But what touched us most was a tiny silk handkerchief with faded embroidery,

from a little new girl, who said, "I do so want to give her something, and it is all I have."

Mother gave them a little talk in the schoolroom the day we left Tucson for the last time. May the words of that, her farewell message, come back to them in after years to guide and bless them.

Woman's Home Missionary Society
Methodist Episcopal Church
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50 or less, 6 cents; 50 to 100, 10 cents